

Message Text

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ACTION EA-01

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O R 140951Z APR 74 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO USINFO WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5755

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS PHNOM PENH 5333

USINFO ALSO FOR VOA NEWSROOM

USINFO ALSO FOR IEA

BANGKOK FOR HEDGES

BANGKOK, HONG KONG AND SAIGON FOR VOA CORRESPONDENTS

STATE FOR S/PRS AND EA/P

SECDEF FOR OASD/PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: KHMER SITUATIONER - APRIL 14, 1974

1. COMMUNIST GUNNERS FIRED EIGHT 107MM ROCKETS INTO A REFUGEE HOUSING AREA ON THE SOUTHWEST EDGE OF PHNOM PENH SATURDAY EVENING KILLING THREE CIVILIANS AND WOUNDING SEVENTEEN OTHERS. THE ATTACK TOOK PLACE AT A TIME WHEN THE KHMER CIVIL POPULATION IS OBSERVING THE TRADITIONALLY IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS AND FAMILY CELEBRATIONS OF THE KHMER NEW YEAR. THE ROCKETS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN FIRED BY A SMALL TEAM OF COMMUNIST INFILTRATORS WHO HAD PENETRATED THE DEFENSE PERIMETER SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH.

2. THE FANK HIGH COMMAND HAD ORDERED ALL UNITS TO BE ALERT FOR COMMUNIST SURPRISE ATTACKS DURING THE NEW YEAR PERIOD. MILITARY OBSERVERS IN PHNOM PENH TODAY POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THE GREAT DIFFICULTY OF PREVENTING SMALL COMMUNIST SAPPER TEAMS FROM INFILTRATING INTO AN AREA AS EXTENSIVE AS THAT WHICH IS NOW BOUNDED BY PHNOM PENH'S EXPANDED DEFENSE PERIMETER.

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3. COMMUNIST GUNNERS ALSO SHELLED KAMPOT CITY SATURDAY, WOUNDING SEVEN CIVILIANS AND THREE FANK SOLDIERS. NO PROGRESS WAS REPORTED SATURDAY IN FANK EFFORTS SOUTHEAST OF THE CITY TO RE-ESTABLISH GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER THE RIVER WHICH CONNECTS KAMPOT WITH THE SEA. MORE FANK REINFORCEMENTS WERE LANDED ON THE COAST DUE SOUTH OF KAMPOT ON SATURDAY, HOWEVER, AND JOINED THE GOVERNMENT GARRISON AFTER A SIX KILOMETER-LONG MARCH OVERLAND TO THE CITY.

4. A TWENTY-FOUR VESSEL MEKONG RIVER CONVOY ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH FROM VIETNAMESE WATERS LAST NIGHT CARRYING 24,000 TONS OF RICE, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, AMMUNITION AND GENERAL CARGO. COMMUNIST SHORE GUNNERS CAUSED MINOR DAMAGE TO TWO VESSELS EN ROUTE. A SECOND CONVOY ALSO ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH FROM KOMPONG CHHNANG VIA THE TONLE SAP RIVER CARRYING FISH AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. COMMUNIST SHORE GUNNERS ATTACKED THE CONVOY EN ROUTE CAUSING LIGHT KHMER NAVY CASUALTIES. IN A THIRD RIVERINE OPERATION ON SATURDAY, A KHMER NAVY RESUPPLY CONVOY WENT UP THE TONLE SAP RIVER FROM PHNOM PENH TO KOMPONG LUONG EAST OF OUDONG. COMMUNIST GUNNERS SET FIRE TO ONE VESSEL WHILE IT WAS UNLOADING CARGO AT KOMPONG LUONG.

5. AT THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF KOMPONG THOM, FANK REPORTS THAT A SWEEP OPERATION SOUTH OF THE CITY WHICH ENDED ON APRIL 12 RESULTED IN A TOTAL OF TWENTY-SIX COMMUNIST PRISONERS CAPTURED, EIGHTEEN WEAPONS SEIZED, AND SIX COMMUNIST SOLDIERS KILLED. THE OPERATION PROVIDED SECURITY FOR FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY VILLAGERS TO FLEE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED AREAS AND MOVE TO KOMPONG THOM. DURING THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS OVER THIRTY-FOUR THOUSAND OTHER REFUGEES HAD PRECEDED THEM INTO GOVERNMENT-SECURED AREAS AT THAT PROVINCIAL CAPITAL.

6. COMMUNIST GROUND AND MORTAR ATTACKS SATURDAY NEAR SAMBOUR TWENTY KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST OF KOMPONG SPEU CAUSED GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS TO WITHDRAW FROM POSITIONS OVERLOOKING ROUTE 4. GOVERNMENT LOSSES DURING THE FIGHTING WERE REPORTED AS MODERATE. ELSEWHERE IN THE REPUBLIC, LIGHT COMMUNIST MORTAR ATTACKS WERE REPORTED AT KOMPONG CHAM, TAKEO, SIEM REAP, ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG NORTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH, AND IN THE BASSAC-ROUTE 30 AREA SOUTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH.

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